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THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Identical letters dated 12 August 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward herewith an official note dated 12 August 1998 addressed to you from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan (see annex I).

A statement dated 10 August 1998 is to be considered as the second annex to the present letter.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its two annexes circulated as a document of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 43, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dr. A. G. Ravan FARHÂDI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX I

Official note dated 12 August 1998 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan addressed to the Secretary-General

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PAKISTANI INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN BY THE TALIBAN

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to documents A/52/1003-S/1998/713, dated 5 August 1998, and A/52/1006-S/1998/727, dated 7 August 1998, and communicates the following points about the implications of the current Pakistani policy towards Afghanistan:

1. The present situation in Afghanistan must not be interpreted as a civil war. It is an invasion of Afghanistan manifested in the progression of an expanded intervention by the Pakistani military intelligence service, demonstrated and implemented through the use of the mercenary Taliban militia. In fact, the Afghan situation must be seen as a country invaded and partly occupied by a neighbouring State, calling for a war of liberation.

2. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is directly involved in recruiting, organizing, training, equipping, financing, arming, deploying and commandeering the Taliban. It also provides logistics and fuel for their vehicles, armoured vehicles and tanks. In essence, the nature of Pakistani support and involvement has taken the configuration of a prolonged and widespread invasion by an organized army of mercenaries. The command and control centre of this infernal war machine has access to very sophisticated technology to update its battle tactics. This presents a new dimension in the nature of the war that immediately put an end to the stalemate prevailing for some months.

3. Continuation of the military invasion of Afghanistan will trigger increasingly deep concern by the Central Asian republics, the Islamic Republic of Iran and other interested countries. The result will be that Pakistan - as the protector and mentor of the Taliban - will be condemned to political isolation in the region. Peace and security in the region will be definitively placed in grave danger.

4. Continuation and expansion of the invasion of Afghanistan will jeopardize the peace process in Afghanistan and the endeavours of the United Nations. Based on the advocacy of a military initiative, the Taliban have, for the past few years, exhibited intransigence towards the peace process. It has been proven that the Pakistani military intelligence service's plan is to make all of Afghanistan subservient to Pakistan by utilizing the Taliban. Otherwise, what rationale exists to justify the formation of a broad-based representative government or the convening of the "Lôya Jirga" ("Grand Assembly") as a nationally traditional decision-making congress?

On the contrary, the Islamic State of Afghanistan has always been ready for sincere face-to-face negotiations. Even in its military initiatives, it has only considered defensive measures with the noble objectives of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan.

5. Neighbouring States that feel the implied dangers and the consequential escalation emanating from the "Afghan conflict" may not content themselves with only strengthening defensive measures on their respective borders with Afghanistan. It is very probable that they will consider adopting steps that may prove to be contrary to the desires of the Taliban and their masters. Such steps will have regional and international ramifications, resembling a domino effect. By all means, ethnic clashes inside Afghanistan will represent both a paramount and a permanent source of tension along Afghanistan's immediate northern and western borders.

6. The military invasion signifies an immediate escalation of ethnic and tribal conflict that the Pakistani military intelligence service has intentionally provoked and used as a tool for instigating national disunity in Afghanistan.

7. Efforts to expand and continue this invasion manifest severe violations of recognized principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Destruction of houses, arbitrary indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians and forced relocation of people to unknown sites - culminating in what is known as ethnic and tribal cleansing - are all deployed as techniques for a show of military might. It is given that the effects of such brutal methods in the Balkans and Africa are closely scrutinized and imitated as models by the Pakistani ISI officers. These acts constitute grave violations of international humanitarian law.

8. The plan of invasion is fully coordinated with the destruction of Afghanistan's infrastructure, the latest example being the intentional burning of wild pistachio jungles and agricultural fields. Just as the economic infrastructure and cultural heritage in cities such as Kabul and Herat have already been destroyed, similar measures have been taken in the provincial capitals of Faryab, Jowzjan and Balkh. Except for that which serves the purpose of invasion, such as roads, all other installations have been ordered destroyed.

9. The present escalating invasion, apart from depriving women and girls the right to work to feed themselves now and education to prepare themselves for the future amounts to an illiteracy campaign for the coming generations. In turn, it is guaranteed that people shall, through lack of education and other resources, become poorer and look to Pakistan for charity.

10. One of the distinguishing factors of this invasion is its abhorrent financial aspect. A considerable portion of the cost of the invasion has been financed through profits earned from the export of heroin. The vast poppy fields in Helmand and Ningarhar provinces - under Taliban rule for a long time - provide ample evidence. Also, other negative outside sources from third world countries and pipeline companies have been involved in funding this war of aggression.

11. Among other distinctions of this invasion is the aspect of training camps inside Afghanistan under Taliban rule. Members of Pakistani extremist organizations, such as Harakat-ul-Ansar and other terrorist groups, have been trained in these camps for a long time. It is being advocated that the trainees be dispatched "to liberate Kashmir". In fact, these trainees are used in international assignments of terrorism and inside Pakistan in communal and sectarian violence against other sects and groups. In addition, financial assistance of certain "organizations" and "individuals", such as Usama-bin-Laden, that are committed to such causes is sought.

12. The continuation of war in Afghanistan - even in the aftermath of a Taliban occupation of more Afghan cities - will trigger a national uprising throughout the country. As such, peace will not be guaranteed. It is not sufficient to say that war is not a solution to the Afghan conflict. It must be added that foreign invasion of Afghanistan through the Taliban cannot guarantee peace. In fact, it will pose further escalating security problems.

13. As a result of the escalation of tension and security perils as a result of the Afghan problem, full regional economic cooperation, transit and trade will not be feasible. As such, the construction of pipelines - gas or oil - will become an impossible task. The invasion of Afghanistan by the Taliban mercenaries can in no way guarantee safety and security.

14. Further steps towards continued invasion of Afghanistan will significantly escalate ethnic tension and sectarian and religious conflict among the different groups in the country. Throughout the countries of the region, related peoples of various ethnic and religious sectarian groups exist - therefore, clashes will provoke major tensions leading to armed confrontations in the region.

15. Continued attempts at invasion will regrettably cause enmity and hatred between the peoples of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Such condition will contribute to the permanent deterioration of the situation in the region, inflicting much suffering and hardship on both peoples.

16. The current policy of the Pakistani intelligence service, ISI, taking into consideration the ethnic, tribal, political and religious sectarian landscape - is a double-edged sword that will not, in fact, spare Pakistan. Such policy will create much internal instability, which is detrimental to the sovereignty of Pakistan.

17. Despite Pakistani ISI expertise, the Taliban will not be able to administer Afghanistan in such a way as to heed the colossal economic, social, cultural and political and security hurdles of the country. Thus, Afghanistan - even as a political tool in Pakistani hands to gain "strategic depth", as stated desirously by the Pakistani Foreign Minister and ISI strategists - will not serve Pakistan's strategic purpose in an eventual war against India.

18. It is hoped that the United Nations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Afghanistan's neighbours and interested countries shall have already recognized the depth of the Afghan tragedy by now. Adopting resolutions and addressing statements that draw a perfect equality between the conflicting

"sides" are not enough. Pakistan has to be clearly addressed as a perpetrator of an invasion.

Enough pressure must be placed on Pakistan to cause the Pakistani military intelligence to withdraw its military and paramilitary personnel from Afghanistan, to put an end to its invasion of and intervention in Afghanistan and to halt immediately and totally the supply of arms, ammunition and fuel to the Taliban. Only such steps could gain the confidence of the Afghans who struggle for their country's freedom and of the countries in the region - thus providing suitable circumstances for coordinated joint efforts for a negotiated settlement of the Afghan problem. The Security Council should adopt appropriate preventive measures to immediately defuse the present dangers within Afghanistan threatening peace and security in the region.

It is increasingly pertinent, and therefore the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan earnestly requests the Security Council to recognize the Pakistani aggression and decide what measures should be taken vis-à-vis Pakistan in accordance with Articles 41 and 42 of the Charter of the United Nations.

ANNEX II

Statement dated 10 August 1998 issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan

PAKISTAN'S "UNDECLARED WAR" ON AFGHANISTAN

The Pakistani-Taliban attack on Mazar-e-Sharif

Saturday, 8 August - The Taliban major assault on Mazar-e-Sharif on 8 August - launched from the western town of Shiberghan - was orchestrated by the Pakistani military intelligence service, ISI. In addition to ordering battle tactics in its mobile command and control centre - moving with the Taliban in its military drive - the Pakistani military institution had dispatched military commandos, paramilitary personnel and mechanized armoured vehicle drivers.

The operation was also more distinguished by its extensive use of air raids - which included by far more planes than are possessed by the Taliban - that preceded the heavy shelling of the city, indiscriminately targeting civilian sites and causing much destruction and heavy casualties.

Once in the city, the Taliban began killing people indiscriminately, as claimed by their spokesman, A. Mannan Niyazi, quoted as saying "we entered the homes and killed our enemies." The Taliban "Islamic Emirate" leader, Mullah Omar, earlier had issued a decree justifying murder owing to lack of food and shelter.

Meanwhile, in Mazar-e-Sharif districts such as Shadyan, Dehdaadi, Khair-Abaad and the Kod-o-Barq (fertilizer factory), the forces of the Islamic State of Afghanistan had staged a resistance that stopped a Taliban push from advancing.

Sunday, 9 August - The success by the government troops further gained momentum when the people staged their uprising in Mazar-e-Sharif. The Taliban in turn were pushed back and the city was temporarily liberated.

In the meantime, a large number of additional Taliban fighters were airlifted from the south to Shiberghan by use of commercial Afghan and unmarked Pakistani military planes. From there, the armed groups were immediately transported by land to western Mazar-e-Sharif, where they joined the retreating Taliban.

Simultaneously in the Shamaali plains of Kohdaaman north of Kabul - the flatlands and hillsides from Kabul to Jabal-al-Saraaj - the Taliban launched a major attack on Bagraam Airport early in the morning via the new road from Kabul through Deh-Sabz. Though many preparations had been made since the eve of 8 August, the repeated attacks culminated in a Taliban defeat by Monday, 10 August, with heavy losses, including five tanks, a dozen pick-up trucks and the death of Taliban Commander Abdul Ghaffaar Akhond.

Monday, 10 August - With the arrival of fresh troops, the Taliban launched another operation and this time entered Mazar-e-Sharif. Fighting still continues on the outskirts of the city.

Pakistani Foreign Minister outlines plan of attack

On 5 August, the Pakistani Foreign Minister, Gohar Ayub Khan, in an interview with the Arabic daily Sharq-al-Awsat, published in London, had already uncovered Pakistan's true motive in Afghanistan. As if speaking on behalf of the Taliban, he stated:

> "The Taliban have besieged the city from two sides, from the direction of Shirberghan and Balkh and from the direction of Kunduz. The Taliban will launch an offensive from Kunduz proceeding towards Hairatan, located on the border with Uzbekistan and moving on to Pul-i-Khumry, blocking the Saalang Pass and ceasing all contacts with Ahmad Shah Massoud. As such, I predict that in the coming days either Mazar-e-Sharif will surrender to the Taliban or that intense fighting will take place."

As is clear, the Pakistani-Taliban offensive on Mazar-e-Sharif serves a twofold purpose. For Pakistan, it manifests realization of "strategic depth" which it hopes to gain by subduing Afghanistan, as was expressed by the Pakistani Foreign Minister in an interview last month, published in the Egyptian daily Al-Ahram. For the Taliban, it represents an act of revenge after its 28 May defeat to recapture Mazar-e-Sharif in 1997. Taliban heavy artillery has extensively destroyed some predominantly Hazara, Tajik and Uzbek sites, such as Sayed Abad.

Defiance of all international and humanitarian laws

Abdul Mannan Niyazi, a Taliban commander, had said to the media that before reaching Maimana the Taliban had burned all the wild pistachio jungles in northern Afghanistan and upon seeing any economically productive installation or site, ordered it to be burned down. Such resolute decisions must only come from the Pakistani ISI, which in Afghanistan has followed a scorched-earth policy amounting to a weakened State. The aim has been to turn Afghanistan into a subservient State. The Pakistani Finance Minister had earlier in the year referred to Afghanistan as "Pakistan's fifth province".

Ethnic cleansing, forced deportation and conscription, pillaging and looting of private property, depriving the civilian population of the means of survival, and attacks on the civilian population by the Taliban have all been in defiance of international and humanitarian laws and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, including the latest statement by the President of the Security Council, dated 6 August 1998 (S/PRST/1998/24). As such, the Taliban have already earned the hatred of the people and, consequently, their draconian rule at gunpoint will bear repercussions, signifying a temporary military occupation. Afghans associate them directly with Pakistan.

Despite repeated appeals by the United Nations Secretary-General and the international community to cease fighting and continue face-to-face negotiations, the Taliban have definitively opted for a military solution, an

initiative pursued by their Pakistani mentors. The Afghan people will resolutely resist against all "Pax Pakistana" attempts to "unify" Afghanistan under the Taliban.

Appeal to the international community

Afghanistan is in a state of undeclared war waged by Pakistan. We strongly appeal to the international community to condemn Pakistani aggression and to exert pressure on Pakistan to stop its aggressive acts of subjugating Afghanistan.